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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
(HABITAT II)
First session
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Items 3 and 6 of the provisional agenda
Preparations at the country level
Draft issue papers and draft format
for the programmes and subprogrammes
of the plan of action

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ON THE WORK OF ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION 26 APRIL - 5 MAY 1993

Note by the secretariat

1. At its fourteenth session held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 April to 5 May 1993, the Commission on Human Settlements adopted resolution 14/20 entitled "Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)" in which it, *inter alia*, requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to forward the report of the Executive Director entitled "United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II): Substantive issues and draft guidelines for preparations and reporting at the country level", as revised by the Commission, to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

2. Accordingly, annexed hereto for the consideration of the Preparatory Committee, is a copy of Commission resolution 14/20 together with a copy of the above-mentioned report, as revised by the Commission. The report contains the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements on substantive issues for Habitat II and draft guidelines for preparations and reporting at the country level. An appendix containing suggested guidelines and contents of national and thematic global reports for Habitat II is also attached.

3. The Preparatory Committee may wish to endorse the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements and adopt the guidelines for preparation and reporting at the country level and for the preparation of the thematic global reports for Habitat II.

GE.94-01163

14/20. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling the recommendations adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in 1976 at Vancouver, Canada, and General Assembly resolution 43/181 of 20 December 1988 on the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and General Assembly resolutions 46/164 of 19 December 1991 and 47/180 of 22 December 1992 on the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II),

Noting with appreciation the decision taken by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) at its organizational session, which stresses the active role that the Commission on Human Settlements can play in supporting the work of the Preparatory Committee,

Recalling that the Preparatory Committee invited the Commission to provide, at its fourteenth session, recommendations on substantive issues for the Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/180 and taking into account discussions on those issues in the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee,

Recalling also that the Preparatory Committee invited the Commission to draft guidelines that will enable States to take a harmonized approach in their preparations and reporting,

Recognizing that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is particularly prepared to promote the tasks and purposes of the Conference,

Noting with satisfaction that research and information activities, specifically designed to assist the preparatory process of the Conference, have already been included in the work programme of the Centre for the biennium 1994-1995,

Emphasizing the ultimate goal of the Conference, which is to improve the living environment of all people on a sustainable basis, with special attention to the needs and contributions of women and vulnerable social groups,

Considering that the Conference will be a central event in the United Nations activities aimed at this goal and that it will thereby further the work carried out and results achieved within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, where vital interdependencies were identified between human settlements development and the state of the natural environment,

Bearing in mind that the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 is the United Nations programme aimed at facilitating adequate shelter for all through an enabling approach and that the international community has renewed its commitment to the Strategy in Agenda 21, z/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Deeply concerned at urban and rural poverty, which brings about misery and human suffering to wide segments of population, in particular women and children, and which represents loss of valuable human resources and is a major underlying reason for the deterioration of the built and natural environment,

Convinced that access to safe and healthy shelter and basic services is essential to a person's physical, psychological, social and economic well-being and that shelter development through an enabling approach can be an important contribution to the national economy,

Cognizant of urban transition as an irreversible demographic, economic and societal process which can be a major instrument for securing balanced economic and spatial development and relieve the severe pressure on scarce agricultural land,

Fully aware of the alarming state of the urban environment in many cities, towns and regions as evidenced by congestion, pollution, pervasive poverty and overall degradation,

Recognizing that effective management of the rural-urban transition and the development of individual settlements is essential in the efforts to minimize the hazards and maximize the benefits of urbanization and ensure a safe and sound living environment,

Also recognizing that effective management of metropolitan cities, where large proportions of urban populations in many countries reside and which contribute substantially to economic, technological, cultural and social development, require special and participative arrangements because of the scale of problems and resources needed, and the complexity of politico-administrative situations,

Stressing the need to study those issues in a programme context in which also targets, timetables and monitoring and evaluation arrangements for action are specified and proposals for necessary institutional reorganizations and mobilization of resources are included,

Reiterating its desire and keen interest to play an active role in the preparations for the Conference,

1. Welcomes the report of the Executive Director entitled "United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II): Substantive issues and draft guidelines for preparations and reporting at the country level", z/ which

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z/ HS/C/14/14/Add.1.

provides a most useful basis for preparing the programme and procedures of the Conference;

2. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to forward the above report, as revised by the Commission and annexed to the present resolution, to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II);

3. Requests the Executive Director to test the feasibility of the guidelines for national and thematic global reports contained in the appendix to the attached annex through the establishment, inter alia, of ad hoc working groups;

4. Recommends that the programme of the Conference focus on main challenges and problems of the future in the field of human settlements and sustainable development, on implementation of programmes resulting from Agenda 21, e/ on international coordination of physical strategies and development projects, and on strengthening the basis for international cooperation in the human settlements field;

5. Decides to discuss, at its fifteenth session, the mid-term review of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 to be prepared by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for the Conference, as requested by the General Assembly, and recommends that this review be supplemented with the results of the evaluation of the Global Strategy to be carried out by the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session;

6. Recommends also that the preparatory work at both national and international levels be based as widely as possible, integrating non-governmental organizations, local governments, communities and the private sector;

7. Encourages and supports the organization of a forum on the conference themes by non-governmental organizations, private and public associations and other relevant groups;

8. Calls upon Governments to establish, as soon as possible, national focal points to coordinate national activities in preparation for the Conference and act as a liaison point with the Secretary-General of the Conference, and suggests that appropriate focal points be such as the focal points established for the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000;

9. Requests the Executive Director to draw up guidelines for national focal points, including suggested action to:

(a) Prepare national reports for the Conference, as described in the present resolution;

(b) Involve, inter alia, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local government agencies and special interest agencies;

(c) Provide information at the national level regarding global human settlements issues and the specific goals of the Conference;

10. Recommends further that, in order to support the work of the ad hoc secretariat for the Conference, which is organizationally part of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), all relevant work carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development and other United Nations bodies be utilized as much as possible;

11. Requests all States Members and observers of the United Nations to participate actively in the preparatory process of the Conference;

12. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint as a matter of urgency a Secretary-General of the Conference, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/180;

13. Requests the Executive Director to support, within available resources, the preparatory process at the country and regional level in response to requests from Governments, with due consideration to regional coordination mechanisms;

14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifteenth session an item entitled "Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)", and confirms its readiness to discuss, inter alia, any subjects which may be referred to it by the Preparatory Committee;

15. Requests the Executive Director to bring the present resolution and its annex and appendix to the notice of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II);

16. Recommends that Governments initiate their national preparatory work for the Conference in line with the outlined proposals and subject to the final decision of the Preparatory Committee.

7th plenary meeting
5 May 1993

ANNEX

United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II): Substantive issues and draft guidelines for preparations and reporting at the country level

I. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

1. During its first organizational session, held from 3 to 5 March 1993, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) decided to invite the Commission on Human Settlements at its fourteenth session "to provide recommendations to the Preparatory Committee ... on substantive issues in an integrated manner for the Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/180 and taking into account discussions on those issues in the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee", and

"to draft guidelines for consideration and adoption by the Preparatory Committee at its first session to enable States to take a harmonized approach in their preparations and reporting". aa/

2. The present report has been prepared to provide the Commission with a basis for its deliberations on these two topics. It is composed of an introduction and two sections. The introduction aims at highlighting the importance of the Conference and suggesting guiding principles that could enhance the positive impact of the Conference's preparatory process for individual countries and for the global community. After an introduction, section I offers specific recommendations on the central themes under which the substantive issues could be regrouped. Section II suggests a set of criteria for the organization and support of country-based preparatory activities.

3. This document is submitted, as revised, to the Preparatory Committee of the Conference as an annex to Commission resolution 14/20.

II. INTRODUCTION

4. "Sustainable development means improving the quality of life for all. It cannot be achieved in a world where more than one billion people live in absolute poverty. It is unacceptable, and even inhuman, to talk about long-term environmental sustainability without considering the short-term problems of mere survival for such a large portion of humanity." This statement, endorsed by the Commission in April 1991, together with the report entitled People, Settlements, Environment and Development, set the tone for the human settlements contributions to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. That Conference recognized the importance and contribution of human settlements to environment and development, and its global plan of action, Agenda 21, is now a blueprint for policy and action for the whole United Nations system and for the Governments it serves.

5. The overall human settlement objective stated in Agenda 21 is

"to improve the social, economic and environmental quality of human settlements and the living and working environments of all people, in particular the urban and rural poor. Such improvement should be based on technical cooperation activities, partnerships among the public, private and community sectors and participation in the decision-making process by community groups and special interest groups such as women, indigenous people, the elderly and the disabled. These approaches should form the core principles of national settlement strategies .... Furthermore, countries should make appropriate provision to monitor the impact of their strategies on marginalized and disenfranchised groups, with particular reference to the needs of women." bb/

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aa/ See A/48/37, para. 22.

bb/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II, para. 7.4.

A. Why a United Nations Conference on Human Settlements?

6. The twentieth century has witnessed an exponential rise in the creation of wealth through the introduction of an unprecedented array of new technologies and production processes. Breakthroughs in science and medicine have resulted in overall improvements in health and life expectancy. This century has also seen wide-ranging experiments with social, economic and political structures to achieve better living conditions for people. At the same time, the present decade will witness the highest population increase of any 10-year period in the history of our planet, past and future.

7. In this momentous transition between the twentieth and the twenty-first century, human settlements - the places where we all live now and which, however transformed, will be the home of generations to come - command the attention of the whole world. Phenomena like the global rural-urban transition, the emergence of numbers of giant cities unrecorded in the history of civilization, the growing numbers of poor women, men and children living in appalling environmental conditions, the seemingly intractable problems of providing decent housing, water, sanitation and transport to all human beings on this planet, the growing social problems posed by homelessness, unemployment and uncertainty have ceased being a distinctive trait of the developing world alone, and are no longer the sole concern of specialized government agencies and international institutions: they now command the attention of national and international media, of institutions of learning and research, of the business community and, even more importantly, that of women and men of good will all over the world.

8. The convening of a habitat conference comes at a pivotal point in history for harnessing scientific, technological and organizational tools for improving the living environment of all people. It is also a unique and welcome challenge for the people working with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The Conference offers a historical opportunity to document, with a degree of penetration never attempted before, the nature, extent and depth of the settlements problems humanity is now facing in a rapidly urbanizing world; to understand what has gone wrong; to document and analyse the many good things that have happened; to identify opportunity; and to build, on the basis of this new knowledge, a vision of a better world to come that we can all build together, with full respect for cultural identity.

9. The present document is an initial contribution to meeting this challenge. It is based on the thoughts, ideas and suggestions of professionals who, because of their association with United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), have been given the opportunity of working in all quarters of the planet and in all areas of human settlements development - policy, planning, management, infrastructure, housing, water, sanitation, energy, transport, human resource development and gender issues. It is also a message and a call for cooperation to the world and to the Habitat community: to all those who, in their different capacities, are striving to improve our living environment and share the hope for a better world for the Earth's children of today and of tomorrow.

10. The opportunity for this contribution has been given by the invitation made to the Commission on Human Settlements to contribute to the preparatory work of the Conference by formulating substantive topics for the Conference's future plan of action and draft guidelines for country-level preparations. It is our

earnest hope that this brief document will constitute a solid basis for the work of the Commission.

B. Need for a new agenda

11. These emerging issues emphasize the urgency for a fresh human settlements agenda, the definition of which is based on three compelling objectives:

(a) To form a positive vision of the urbanized world of the future in order to inspire forward-looking principles and actions;

(b) To manage human settlements of all sizes better, and to arrest the social and physical deterioration of the human environment;

(c) To place human settlements within the macroeconomic and social context in order to understand better the pivotal role investments in human settlements can play in bringing about equitable social development, economic growth and a better quality of life.

12. The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) - and the process leading up to it - can focus the attention of the world on:

(a) Recognizing human settlements development as a strategic, cross-cutting dimension of the development process;

(b) Helping to reorient governmental, donor and lender interventions in an urbanizing world;

(c) Redefining the role of UNCHS (Habitat) and strengthening its capacity to respond effectively to global, national and local human settlements challenges in the next two decades;

(d) Recommending appropriate United Nations organizational arrangements to implement and monitor the global plan of action.

C. Guiding principles for the preparatory process

13. First, we must define the Habitat II goal in terms that are comprehensible to everybody and that can mobilize the world's commitment, energy and imagination. Habitat II cannot be a celebratory event. There is little reason to celebrate the fact that more people live in poverty than was the case 20 years ago; that more people - women, men and children - are living today in unhealthy and precarious housing conditions than ever before in the history of humanity; that the settlements of the world, both developed and developing, find it increasingly difficult to ensure acceptable social, economic and, in particular, environmental conditions to the totality of their citizens. All of these problems are becoming more acute in urban areas, and increasingly so in rapidly growing large agglomerations. Cities, poverty and the environment are realities that everybody understands: they are respectively issues, problems and values that we all share and identify with.

14. Secondly, we must reach out to our constituencies. Habitat II, like other United Nations conferences, is called by Governments for Governments. But Governments, and this is an emerging reality world wide, are ultimately accountable to citizens. And the scope and range of action of central governments is becoming much more limited in terms of what they can do themselves. They can, however, become a powerful force and amplify the impact of their legislative, regulatory and promotional action if they succeed in mobilizing local action; in acting strategically rather than controlling indiscriminately; in developing the humility to understand, and the vision to act according to a humane and, thus, intelligent perception of the problems at hand. If we can use the Habitat II opportunity for reaching out to all our constituencies at the global, national and local levels, and thus capture the win-win options at hand, we shall set in motion processes the beneficial effects of which will go far beyond the 1996 Conference itself.

15. Thirdly, and finally, we must develop a truly global perception of critical human settlements issues and opportunities. For too long we have worked on the assumption that the North has everything to teach, and the South everything to learn. We must start thinking in terms of a two-way flow. There is a lot that the North can share with the South in terms of national and local experiences in human settlements planning, development and management; in transparent and participatory approaches to decision-making and local development. But there are many lessons that everybody can learn from the South. Thus, one of the challenges for the preparatory process is also to document innovative and successful experiences and to use the process itself to set up a global capacity for identifying, documenting and exchanging experiences on a continuous basis, paying particular attention to local and community-level action. This, too, will help us to develop a momentum which will go well beyond the Conference itself.

III. SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

16. The objectives of the Conference as spelled out in General Assembly resolution 47/180 of 22 December 1992 include, inter alia, the adoption of "a general statement of principles and commitments" and a "global plan of action capable of guiding national and international efforts through the first two decades of the next century". The substantive part of such a plan of action should include: guidelines for national settlement policies and strategies to eradicate urban and rural poverty and promote sustainable economic development; programmes and subprogrammes to implement relevant elements of Agenda 21 in order to promote environmentally sustainable human settlements; proposals for the mobilization of human, financial and technical resources, internationally and nationally, from the private and public sector, to implement Agenda 21 programmes; and measures to strengthen national, metropolitan and municipal institutions and machinery in order to enhance human settlements development.

17. Discussions at the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) further elaborated a set of specific issues. Some of these represent a confirmation of concerns already expressed in General Assembly resolution 47/180, or refinements of previously stated issues, while others are new. These were summarized by the Chairman as follows:

(a) Implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and human settlements-related parts of Agenda 21, including technology issues;

(b) Eradication of poverty - urban and rural poverty issues and human settlements;

(c) A comprehensive plan of action based on capacity-building and the enabling approach;

(d) Housing policies and finance - regulatory regimes for housing, building and land-use management and the role of the private sector;

(e) Promoting investment as a contribution to economic growth, employment and improvement of the quality of life;

(f) Economic and spatial policies and development strategies for rural and urban settlements, their sustainable interaction and linkages and interdependence;

(g) The contribution of cities to global sustainable development.

A. Organizing principles

18. In light of the decisions of the General Assembly and the views put forward by the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee, it is clear that national governments are looking to the Habitat II Conference to concern themselves with settlements and urban policies which will be innovative and enabling, and capable of generating sustainable economic growth, alleviating poverty and enhancing the urban environment. Governments are also expecting that the Conference will address: (a) the integration and participation of the urban and rural poor in the political, social and economic life of human settlements; and (b) capacity-building at the community, local and national levels to enhance the efficient management of human settlements and the effective implementation of national human settlements development policies. Finally, it is clear from the issues elaborated by the General Assembly and the Preparatory Committee that the issue of resources - human, financial and technological - will have to be an a priori concern at the Habitat II Conference, especially given the need to use these limited resources more efficiently.

B. Proposed substantive themes

19. From this background, two central themes emerge as crucial for Habitat II in assisting national communities to focus on the issues of urbanization, human settlements and shelter:

(a) Sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world;

(b) Adequate Shelter for All.

20. Suggestions for the preparation of national and global thematic reports on the above themes are contained in the appendix to the present text.

IV. PREPARATORY PROCESS AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

A. How will the process benefit countries?

21. The preparatory process is conceived as a capacity-building exercise by providing an opportunity for national communities to review policies and strategies and avail themselves of ad hoc instruments provided by the secretariat of the Habitat II Conference and partner United Nations bodies and agencies both to improve settlements management and to monitor performance on a sustained basis and beyond the Conference itself. The preparatory process can pave the way for:

(a) The adoption of more effective sectoral and inter-sectoral development policies and strategies through the linking of human settlements management with the socio-economic agenda;

(b) Broader participation and commitment of actors at all levels to implement those policies and strategies, leading to greater mobilization of local resources;

(c) Targeted investments leading to more sustainable mechanisms for implementation at the community, local and national levels.

22. Some of the specific outcomes of the process could include:

(a) A national commitment to implement country-wide action plans;

(b) Participatory processes for identifying issues and formulating policy options in human settlements development;

(c) Sets of indicators to enable countries to assess human settlements conditions, devise appropriate policies and strategies and measure their impact on improving human settlements conditions;

(d) Country reports presenting:

(i) A set of strategic options and national action plans to address the following priority areas: a. policies and strategies for an urbanizing world; b. democratization and capacity-building; c. investing in sustainable settlements development;

(ii) Experiences with innovative approaches to settlements management.

B. Guiding principles

23. The guiding principles for the preparatory process are:

(a) Country activities could feed into a global forum of ideas and successful practices on human settlements development and management;

(b) The process leading to the Conference should be firmly rooted at the country level and provide instruments to help countries assess the problems and challenges which they are facing;

(c) Broad-based participation involving from the outset the following key actors:

(i) Grass-roots community leaders;

(ii) Civic leaders, prominent personalities, national and local politicians, mayors, councillors;

(iii) The non-governmental community;

(iv) The business community;

(v) Human settlements professionals from the public and private sector.

Ideally, each of these groups should be part and parcel of the whole preparatory process, both at the country level and in the Preparatory Committee itself.

C. Modalities

24. Setting in motion country preparations and securing national commitment. The following initiatives could greatly facilitate country-level preparatory processes and secure national commitment for follow-up action:

(a) An enabling role at the highest possible government level (the Office of the Presidency or its equivalent is suggested) would provide the impetus and the guidance for initiating preparatory processes. Such a role would guarantee the success of the process, ensure tangible recommendations and suggestions for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of follow-up action at the country level, and pave the way for more effective and responsive external support;

(b) Creation of a national task force/steering committee with the participation of all key actors to coordinate the country preparations.

25. Strengthening participatory processes and organizing country consultations. Representatives from each of the five key groups of actors mentioned above could be identified and requested to mobilize their respective constituencies to contribute to the following steps of the preparatory process:

(a) Formulate, from their own perspective, preliminary assessments of settlements-development issues as a base for local and national consultations;

(b) The various actors could organize local or country-wide consultations to reach a consensus on priority issues and options for future actions;

(c) The task force/steering committee could facilitate local and national consultations to debate results of this work and raise awareness;

(d) The consultative process could culminate in a country-wide human settlements forum providing the impetus for the implementation of local and national action plans beyond 1996.

26. Applying human settlements indicators. The secretariat of the Habitat II Conference could develop and provide to the task forces/steering committees a set of indicators and other ad-hoc tools and instruments to assist them in assessing human settlements conditions, devising appropriate policies and strategies and measuring their impact in improving human settlements. These indicators and tools could provide a common methodology for country reports to be presented at the Conference and at the same time provide the "harmonized approach" called for in General Assembly resolution 47/180.

27. Preparing country reports.

(a) Country reports could be prepared by the task force/steering committee, incorporating the conclusions of the consultative process, and reflect a common national view of the challenges ahead and the strategic options needed to meet them;

(b) In order to harmonize national reporting and allow the exchange of experiences among countries, the preparation of reports should be structured around the three central themes suggested earlier;

(c) If it is not possible to arrive at a common view of challenges and options for settlements development, it is suggested that complementary presentations on diverging views, options and strategies accompany the country reports;

(d) Various media for presentations on successful experiences could be used as appropriate to the subject-matter and to enhance effectiveness of communications.

D. Support to country preparations

28. One of the tasks of the secretariat of the Habitat II Conference, pending the decisions of the Preparatory Committee, will be to mobilize, facilitate and provide external support for the preparatory process at the country level in response to requests from Governments. The secretariat will, in particular, call upon relevant ongoing programmes and initiatives of the United Nations system to provide funding and technical assistance for country-level activities including the application of human settlements indicators, policy analysis and reviews, the documentation of successful country experiences, regional and subregional workshops, training seminars and workshops, and country consultations.

29. Regional and subregional activities. The secretariat will seek multilateral and bilateral support to organize subregional meetings based on the central themes of the Habitat II Conference to identify issues of common concern, to develop frameworks for organizing and implementing the preparatory process and to exchange ideas and experiences. The secretariat would also cooperate with the regional commissions in seminars and other events organized at the regional level.

30. Advisory services. The secretariat will establish international partnerships to provide follow-up ad hoc advisory services upon the request of Governments to help organize country consultations, initiate and facilitate dialogue between different interest groups and synthesize reporting. The areas in which advisory services will be encouraged include, inter alia:

(a) Facilitation of country consultations, round tables, seminars, workshops, expert panels and so forth;

(b) Use of media;

(c) Organizing community meetings and school assemblies;

(d) Organizing national competitions and exhibitions.

31. Global competition for innovative practice. In addition to the above, the secretariat could organize, in collaboration with sponsors, a global competition on innovative approaches to human settlements management in each of the following areas:

(a) Awareness-building campaigns (all media);

(b) Community/non-governmental organization/neighbourhood initiatives in improving the living/working environment;

(c) Management actions/initiatives undertaken by a local authority to expand coverage of basic infrastructure and/or services;

(d) Public-private partnerships for settlement development/redevelopment;

(e) Applications of information technology in human settlements management.

Submissions for the global competition would be made directly to the organizing committee by any individual, group or organization. The authors/performers/producers of short-listed entries from each region (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America) would be invited to attend the Conference. Accepted formats for entry include school plays and street plays, songs, dances and poetry, illustrated story books, posters, videos, picture books, cartoons, graffiti, and case-studies. Ways and means would have to be found to facilitate the participation of competitors from the least developing countries.

32. Pending the decisions of the Preparatory Committee, UNCHS (Habitat) will forward appropriate preliminary guidelines to Governments and national focal points where established.

V. CONCLUSIONS

33. The considerations and ideas contained in this report have one ultimate objective: to make the 1996 Conference a success.

34. Although criteria for success are difficult to predetermine, it is felt that three essential elements will be needed: focus, realism and participation.

Focus

35. The Conference will not be able to, nor should it, cover all aspects of social and economic development. It will, on the contrary, serve a very important purpose if it can show how sustainable settlements management can give a major contribution to achieving this goal. An attempt has been made in this report to focus on three main areas: policy; democratization and capacity-building; resource mobilization and investment.

Realism

36. It will be essential to avoid building unrealistic expectations on the amount of external resources that the Conference will be capable of mobilizing. Even under the most favourable conditions, external funding is only a fraction of the total amount of resources devoted to human settlements in all countries. Although a larger flow of external funding and assistance to human settlements development is a desirable outcome, sustainability can only be achieved in the medium and long term by using scarce external resources in a strategic and catalytic way. Defining this will be a major challenge for the Conference and another element of its success.

Participation

37. In the past, many United Nations conferences have culminated in a decision-making process for Governments and a separate forum for non-governmental organizations. Although there may still be a need for non-governmental organizations from all over the world to use the Conference as an occasion to meet and discuss common strategies, participatory processes at the country level should lead to one United Nations Conference on Human Settlements: an event capable of coalescing the views and commitments emerging from all countries into one vision, one commitment and one global action programme based on consensus and constructive dedication to a common goal.

APPENDIX

Suggested guidelines and contents of national and thematic global reports for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

A. Focus of the Conference

1. The Conference should establish new practical proposals for improving living conditions in human settlements with specific attention to the needs and contribution of women and socially vulnerable and unserved groups. These proposals will pay particular attention to meeting the basic human need of shelter. To meet this aim and to focus on priority issues, the Conference should concentrate on two major themes for the global plan of action:

(a) Sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world;

(b) Adequate Shelter for All.

B. Suggested topics for thematic global reports for Habitat II

2. It is suggested that the Conference outcomes should be based on the consideration of two major reports which reflect the two themes. The first of these is provisionally entitled "Sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world - prospects and proposals". It is proposed that the major topics for inclusion, with particular reference to Agenda 21, would be:

(a) Review of global demographic trends, urbanization and metropolitan cities;

(b) Urban and rural linkages, spatial planning, strategies for managing urban transitions, with specific reference to metropolitan cities;

(c) Urban economy, relationship to macroeconomic performance, poverty alleviation, employment and income generation;

(d) Urban environment: global implications, strategies for sustainable development, provision of infrastructure and basic services;

(e) Scale of deficiencies and deprivation, vulnerable groups, gender issues, reaching the unserved;

(f) Urban management, capacity-building, mobilizing human, financial and technical resources, decentralization, public-private coalitions.

3. The second major report is provisionally entitled "Adequate Shelter for All". This would examine the implementation of the recommendations from Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I), with particular reference to the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. It is suggested that the major topics for inclusion should be:

(a) Review of the global shelter situation including the gender perspective, and its implications;

(b) Implementation of Habitat I recommendations and review and revision of the Global Strategy;

(c) Availability, affordability, accessibility and quality of housing, land and related services;

(d) Role of shelter in structural adjustment, economic importance of shelter provision;

(e) Disaster prevention, building materials and technology, infrastructure provisions;

(f) Housing indicators, scale of deficiencies and deprivation, vulnerable groups, reaching the unserved;

(g) Institutional arrangements, capacity-building, mobilization of resources, finance, subsidies and regulations.

4. The two reports would each contain recommendations on policies and their implementation, as the basis for the declaration and the global plan of action. They should be built largely upon national reports produced according to the guidelines contained in the report, discussions held during regional and subregional preparatory meetings, and at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements.

C. National reports

5. National reports would be one of the essential building blocks for the major Conference reports on the two themes outlined in the previous section. Subject to some degree of variation to suit specific national circumstances, they would be structured in a similar way to the two major thematic reports. They might also include specific case studies. They should contain national housing indicators and a national plan of action with an indication of the principles on which it is based. This would allow the national reports to be more easily synthesized to produce the two thematic Conference reports. The national reports should be prepared in conjunction with as wide a range of national groups and interests as possible.

6. On the basis of the recommendation of the human settlements-related parts of Agenda 21, the following gives examples of the topics to be covered in the national reports.

(a) Sustainable human settlements

(i) Whether urban and rural planning and management guidelines have been adopted and applied in the areas of land management, urban environmental management, infrastructure management and municipal finance and administration;

(ii) What has been done to accelerate efforts to reduce urban and rural poverty through a number of actions, including generating employment for the poor, particularly women, through the provision, improvement and maintenance of urban infrastructure and services and the support of economic activities in the informal sector, such as repairs, recycling, services and small commerce;

(iii) What has been provided in specific assistance to the poorest of the urban poor through, inter alia, the creation of social infrastructure in order to reduce hunger and homelessness, and the provision of adequate community services;

(iv) What has been done to encourage the establishment of indigenous community-based organizations, private voluntary organizations and other forms of non-governmental entities that can contribute to the efforts to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for low-income families;

(v) What innovative city planning strategies are under consideration to address environmental and social issues by reducing subsidies on, and recovering the full costs of, environmental and other services of high standard (e.g., water supply, sanitation, waste collection, roads, telecommunications) provided to higher-income neighbourhoods;

(vi) What has been done to improve the level of infrastructure and service provision in poorer urban areas and whether external assistance has been received for this purpose and for the adoption of an integrated approach to such improvement;

(vii) What has been done to develop local strategies for improving the quality of life and the living environment, integrating decisions on land use and land management, investing in the public and private sectors and mobilizing human and material resources, thereby promoting economic development that is environmentally sound and protective of human health;

(viii) What has been done to strengthen urban data systems;

(ix) What has been done to relieve pressure on large urban agglomerations;

(x) What has been done to review urbanization processes and policies in order to assess the environmental impacts of growth and apply urban planning and management approaches specifically suited to the needs, resource capabilities and characteristics of their growing intermediate-sized cities;

(xi) What has been done to institutionalize a participatory approach to sustainable urban development, based on a continuous dialogue between the actors involved in urban development (the public sector, private sector and communities), especially women and indigenous people;

(xii) What has been done to improve the urban environment by promoting social organization and environmental awareness through the participation of local communities in the identification of public services needs, the provision of urban infrastructure, and the enhancement of public amenities;

(xiii) What action has been taken for the formulation and implementation of local Agenda 21s.

(b) Adequate shelter

(i) Measures taken to provide shelter to the homeless poor and vulnerable groups;

(ii) How the country has adopted and/or strengthened its national shelter strategy, with targets based, as appropriate, on the principles and recommendations contained in the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000;

(iii) What protection and enforcement there is in law against unfair eviction from homes and land;

(iv) What support there is of the shelter efforts of the urban and rural poor, the unemployed and the unserved no-income groups by adopting and/or adapting existing codes and regulations, to facilitate their access to land, finance and low-cost building materials and by actively promoting the regularization and upgrading of informal settlements and urban slums as an expedient measure and pragmatic solution to the urban shelter deficit;

(v) What access there is for the urban and rural poor to shelter by adopting and utilizing housing and finance schemes and new innovative mechanisms adapted to their circumstances;

(vi) What environmentally compatible shelter strategies there are at national, state/provincial and municipal levels through institutional arrangements put in place for their implementation, including partnerships among the private, public and community sectors and with the support of community-based organizations;

(vii) What programmes have been formulated and implemented to reduce the impact of rural-to-urban drift by improving rural living conditions;

(viii) What resettlement programmes have been developed and implemented to address the specific problems of displaced populations in their respective countries;

(ix) What system is in place to monitor the implementation of national shelter strategies by using, inter alia, the monitoring guidelines adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements and the Shelter Sector Performance Indicators being produced jointly by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the World Bank;

(x) Whether the country is the recipient of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to support the implementation of the national shelter strategy and the specific types of assistance required to do so.